attacks on officers were made in the Press, ask the officer concerned to clear his character, or the newspaper which published the libel should be proceeded against. The way in which the Government responded to communal representation seemed to encourage the existence of caste feeling in regard to appointments. The object with which the Assembly itself was created was defeated when caste or sectarian representation was demanded by the different communities. The Member requested that such a sectarian agitation be stamped out altogether. The appointment of foreigners was, the Member submitted, justifiable only when natives were not available. When such importations were necessary, the larger and wider field of British India should be made the field for recruitment and not the narrower fields of the adjoining British District or Native State.

In conclusion, the Member requested that a Committee might be appointed to inquire into the representations made at the Assembly on the public service and take evidence and submit its report to Government.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

138. Plea for the institution of a Civil Service Examination for Travancore.

Mr. P. A. Abraham B. A., B. L. (Member, Kottayam taluk) said that the object of his representation was to bring about some modification in the manner of filling up appointments. The importance of the subject would be evident from repeated representations in the previous sessions of the Assembly and from frequent discussion of it in the newspapers of the land, in which grave statements were made about the manner of filling up vacancies. Complaints of the kind the Member was referring to were as old as the Assembly. It was a difficult problem for solution. But the complaints being loud, some remedy should be found. What struck the Member as a remedy was the institution of a Civil Service Examination in the same manner as the I. C. S. The chief defect in the existing arrangements was that a qualified young man entering the public service in his 25th year had to wait till he was about 50 years old for the post of a Peishkar or a Division Assistant. In other words, he had no chance of filling a responsible post when he had the necessary mental energy and vigour. Such a gradation of the service was not to the benefit of the State or of the officer concerned. On account of there being no chance for promotion within a reasonable time, several young men with high qualifications had to go outside the State for appointment. If under a system of Civil Service Examination the more brilliant of the natives could be appointed in the service, that would be a distinct advantage to the country.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

139. The removal of all kinds of racial bar in the matter of admission to the Public service and the need for the recognition of equality of civic rights.

Mr. Eapen Geevarghese (Member, Mavelikara taluk) said that the movement demanding civic rights to all classes of His Highness' subjects was one year old and that there were not many who had not become aware of its aims and objects. It was not their desire to deprive any community of its rights and long-established privileges. Their cherished ambition was that they should be given their due without distinction of caste or creed and that Government should recognise the equality of all citizens. He could not understand how they, forming twenty six lakhs of His Highness' subjects composed of Christians, Mahomedans, Ezhavas, Pulayas, Parayas, &c., were considered inferior to the caste Hindus. On the other hand, the Christians were in the forefront in education, the Mahomedans in trade, the Ezhavas in industries and the Pulayas and Parayas in husbandry, on which other landed classes lived. He was sure that the truth of the above facts and statements was being recognised by their several well-wishers and friends from among the caste Hindus. Their chief complaint was their exclusion from the Land Revenue Department. The advocates of the civic rights movement had equal right to know and criticise the management of any department in the State. If it was contended that the amalgamation of Devaswoms with the normal Land Revenue Department was the real cause of the bar to their employment in that important branch of the State service, then the only course open was to separate the two. A progressive Government should always respond to the advanced views of reformers, and if it was not done, dangerous results were likely to

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

follow as in other countries. The necessity for the separation of the two departments was advocated even by the Jenmi representatives. Such being the trend of view of the people, the reform proposed should no longer be withheld, which in effect was placing the major portion of His Highness' subjects under a long-standing disability. Formerly, the members of the Ezhava, Pulaya and Paraya communities had no access to schools and it was only during the past few years that their disabilities in that direction were removed and as a result they had a few educated and enlightened men among them. A new life had come over them and the yearning thus exhibited for higher aspirations was the natural consequence of the spread of education among them. It was not possible to curb that spirit.

The next request made was that they should be admitted freely into all public institutions. The *Satroms*, Palaces and other buildings which were now being utilized by camping officers who are caste Hindus were closed to them. They were undergoing serious hardships and difficulties whenever they wanted to present a petition to the officers or submit personally their grievances. The distinctions observed in those ways recognised caste and encouraged the evils resulting from it. He asked for the recognition of the rights referred to by him and the announcement of a favourable reply.

Mr. T. K. Madhavan (Member, Nominated) said that, firstly, from the point of view of their self-respect, their exclusion from certain departments of the State service on the ground of their belonging to a particular caste was a matter of great grievance to them. Secondly, the idea of civic equality was in the air everywhere, mostly due to the spread of education among the classes of people concerned. The people all over the country had begun to feel the new life and to insist on being admitted into all institutions maintained by Government.

Their first request was that the Land Revenue Department should be thrown open to them as they were to other subjects of the State. The 26 lakhs of people whom the speakers on that subject represented wished early action being taken in the matter of granting their request.

The Member next urged that admission to the Nayar Brigade should also be allowed to all classes of His Highness' subjects.

He then pleaded for the removal of their grievance due to untouchability and unapproachability.

Dewan.—This relates to religion and Government cannot well interfere. Suppose Government publish a notification declaring the abolition of *theendal* from tomorrow, do you think that it could be enforced? Is it practicable?

Member.—The Japanese Government have issued an edict and have thereby stopped it.

Dewan.—I do not mean to say that *theendal* should exist for all time. It might stop in course of time as the result of the spread of education. Things are not now what they were 50 years ago in matters of social reform. But, do you think that one man, or even a Government for that matter, will succeed in bringing about the change desired by you?

Member.—I have got the Japanese Government as an authority to say that Government can succeed in their efforts.

Dewan.—You may go on.

The next prayer of the Member was that all classes of Hindus should be allowed free access into Hindu temples. He submitted that the recent decision of the High Court declaring the entry of an Ezhava into a temple as an act of defilement had caused great heart-burning among the community and observed that the matter should have been disposed of by a Full Bench of the High Court. The suggestion of the Member was that a Royal Proclamation should be issued by Government removing untouchability and unapproachability. The Member contended that, if the present state of affairs were to continue, it would lead to the gradual conversion of Hindus to Christianity and Islam and thus result in a great fall in the number of Hindus in course

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

of time. He also presented the resolutions passed in various places on the question which had been sent to him to be submitted at the Assembly.

Mr. C. Thomas (Member, T. I. C., Haripad) also said that, from a numercial point of view, the classes of people at present excluded from the Land Revenue Department formed the majority of His Highness' subjects. The only remedy was the separation of the Devaswoms from the Land Revenue Department.

Mr. K. M. Mamman Mappila (Member, Nominated) compared the State to a family and observed that every member ought to have equal rights in the family. The fact that different members of the family followed diverse avocations in life should not deprive them of their inherent legitimate rights. What they urged was that it was a loss of such right to be told that 26 lakhs of people could not expect any appointment in the Land Revenue Department on the sole ground of their belonging to a particular creed or caste. It was destrucitve of all sense of self-respect. They were, no doubt, grateful to Government for what had been done to uplift the depressed classes. But they would feel satisfied only when they were treated on terms of equality with other classes of His Highness' subjects. The invidious distinction thus shown had already sown seeds of party strife in the interior parts where such a feeling of class jealousy had been absent. The contention of the Member was that the Land Revenue Department, or for that matter any other Department of the State, should not be closed to any class of His Highness' subjects. Throughout the world the idea of equality of civic rights was spreading and even in Travancore some members of the Christian community were now occupying positions which they did not hold some years ago. It was deplorable that the subject which had been on the *tapis* of the Assembly for the past 14 years had not been favourably disposed of yet and it was to be regretted that they were forced to bring up the subject again. He hoped that their prayer would be granted at least now.

Mr. K. I. Kochippan Mappila (Member, Nominated) observed that, while other countries were being shaken rudely by several causes such as strikes of different kinds and epidemic diseases, Travancore had become disturbed on account of discontent and restlessness among the vast majority of the people who were suffering from civic disabilities. It was not a satisfactory state of affairs that such a vast population in a country should be denied the privileges of equal citizenship. The Member, therefore, requested that their long-standing grievance might be redressed.

Mr. Varkey Tharien (Member, Vaikom taluk) represented that the one cause of want of cordiality among the different communities was the feeling among a large section of the people that they were being refused admission into the Revenue and other departments of the public service, excluded from *Satroms*, hostels and other public institutions, and were not being enlisted in the Nayar Brigade. He prayed that those disabilities be removed and complete equality of civic rights with other classes of His Highness' subjects recognised.

Mr. C. T. Thommi (Member, Alangad taluk) said that he did not wish to repeat what others had already dealt with and thus waste time. He requested that the Land Revenue Department be thrown open to the members of all classes of His Highness' subjects.

Rev. Fr. Thomas M. Murikal (Member, T. I. C., Changanacherry) first referred to the European war as a great leveller of all inequalities in citizenship and observed that the keynote of success in the war was the recognition of the principle of equality of rights. He requested that the same policy might be adopted by the Government of His Highness with regard to civic rights and that thereby citizenship in the State be made a matter of equal glory to the Hindu, the Christian and the Mahomedan alike. The Member then referred to such progressive measures as the establishment of the Legislative Council, the Town Improvement Committees and the Popular Assembly and added that they were reforms of great statesmanship which any Travancorean might look upon with feelings of satisfaction. In spite of those reforms they were behind hand in one important matter, *i. e.*, in respect of the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

partial citizenship enjoyed by the majority of His Highness' subjects, the Eazhava, the Christian, the Mahomedan and the so-called low caste communities in Travancore. Through an erroneous notion of the religions of those communities, they were being debarred from admission into the Land Revenue Department. The contention of the Member was that religion had nothing to do with equality of civic rights. If the management of Hindu temples stood as a real and serious obstacle, the only course to be adopted was to separate the Devaswoms from that department. Finally, the Member requested, in view of the grounds stated by him, that Government be pleased to declare that caste and creed would not be a bar to one's eligibility for admission into any of the public services in the State and to open the Land Revenue Department to all.

Mr. P. K. Kurien (Member, T. I. C., Kottayam) did not want to reiterate what had been said by the previous Members. He only requested that all institutions which were being maintained at Government cost might be thrown open to all people, regardless of caste or creed and that no one should be denied that privilege.

Mr. P. F. Mathew (Member, T. I. C., Alwaye) also dwelt upon the disabilities they were suffering on account of exclusion from the Land Revenue Department and the Army and explained how the depth of feeling had affected them and caused serious disappointment among them. He too requested an early remedy for their complaints and ills.

Mr. P. I. Varkey (Member, Trading Classes, Kottayam) said that the best evidence of the existence of inequality of civic rights in the State was the fact that Government institutions like the hostels for students and *Satroms* were not open to all classes of His Highness' subjects. It ought not to be the policy of Government to always benefit the community already enjoying the fruits of a well-ordered administration and keep down in perpetual check the depressed and backward classes who, on account of their illiteracy and want of enlightenment, were at the bottom of the social ladder. The duty of a Government should be to utilize to the fullest advantage the services of all its qualified and educated citizens, as otherwise the State would be a loser. To delay the reform any longer was to allow the perpetuation of a long-standing grievance. The leading men and the Press had also advocated the reform they were urging and no time should be lost in carrying it out. The Member, therefore, asked that the Land Revenue Department and the Army be thrown open to all classes of His Highness' subjects without distinction of caste or creed.

Mr. P. Jacob Kurien (Member, Nominated) in the course of his remarks said that, in view of the new angle of vision abroad, the Government also should modify its views. It was openly admitted that the Travancore Government was Hindu in character, but that fact should not be a reason for placing disabilities of any kind on any class of people. Their representation was that the 26 lakhs of His Highness' subjects composed of Christians, Ezhavas, Mahomedans, Pulayas, Parayas, &c., were being systematically excluded from the Land Revenue Department. Their object was not to get more appointments in the State service. That idea might be dismissed from the mind of Government altogether, if it had been ever entertained. They were only fighting for a principle. To say to their face that they were not to be given equality in the matter of civic rights with other communities was to brand them with insult. Apart from that personal point of view, it was well known that the happiness and prosperity of a country depended upon the enjoyment of equal civic rights by all without distinction of caste or creed. The subject matter of their grievance had been before the Assembly for the past 15 years and it was a matter of grief to them that they had to bring up the subject again. By being thus kept back from their rights and privileges, they were being slighted by other communities. The Member then examined the theory of *Thirupadidanam* and said that, even under it, the welfare and prosperity of all classes of His Highness' subjects could not have been disregarded by the authorities, for at that time there were Christians, Mahomedans, Ezhavas, Pulayas, Parayas, &c., who were the loyal subjects of His Highness the then Maharajah. The Member observed that the liberal educational policy of the Government had been chiefly responsible for broadening their mind and creating

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

a craving for new ideas and new ideals. They never wanted to interfere with the administration of the Devaswoms or do anything which was likely to wound the feelings of other communities. On the other hand, they were for larger funds being made available for expenditure on Devaswoms. They were only jealous of their own rights and privileges and wanted to uphold them at any cost. The main question was whether they were citizens or not in Travancore. The Member sincerely hoped that their frequent representation would touch the sympathetic chord of Government and that they would be given a favourable reply on the spot.

Dewan's reply.—I have listened to the representations on this subject with very great attention. These representations will receive my very careful and anxious consideration.

140. Need for throwing open the Revenue Department to all classes of subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja.

Mr. N. Kumaran B. A., B. L. (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) before proceeding with his representation observed that *theendal* came into prominence when Government insisted on all classes of pupils being admitted into public schools, as that gave an opportunity to the people to resist the efforts of Government. What the Member emphasised was that Government should not associate themselves with *theendal* or such other religious questions. He then objected to the interpretation of defilement by the High Court in the Kadakavoor temple case and observed that it was against the intention of the legislature. He asked Government to declare that ceremonial defilement was not an offence. The Government should not accept *theendal* or caste; nor should it be recognised by Government officers. A notification should issue to secure the above end.

The Member then requested that the Land Revenue Department be thrown open to all classes of His Highness' subjects and reiterated the grounds urged by the speakers on the previous subject.

Mr. Punnoose Kurien (Member, Changanacherry taluk) dwelt at length on the necessity of granting equality of rights and opportunities to all people in the State and added that, if the merging of the management of temples in the Land Revenue Department was a bar, the Devaswoms should be separated from that department, the different communities being thus afforded an opportunity of serving in the Land Revenue Depatment.

Mr. Varkey Uthuppu (Member, Muvattupuzha taluk) echoed the sentiments and views of the previous Member and requested that Christians and other excluded communities be freely employed in the Land Revenue Department.

Mr Ousep Domini (Member, Trading Classes, Changanacherry) said that he had nothing to add to what had been said already on the subject by other Members.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

141. Social disabilities of Ezhavas and other depressed classes.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated) submitted that, though a large percentage of Eazhava boys were attending schools, sufficient interest was not being taken by the department to spread education among the girls of the community. Out of 352 Girls' schools only 180 were open to the community. He requested the Government to impress on the department the need for persistent action in the matter.

Mr. N. R. Krishnan (Member, Nominated) spoke at length against the observance of *theendal* and the consequent disabilities imposed upon the castes affected. He submitted that Government should not hesitate to take steps to remove their disabilities, one of which related to the free use of public roads and lanes. All sign-boards prohibiting certain communities from using particular roads and lanes ought to be removed.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly